



Embassy of the United States of America, Manila

Public Affairs Section

# NEWS RELEASE

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***Statement by U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.  
World Press Freedom Day  
May 3, 2010***

May 3 is World Press Freedom Day – the day we mark each year to honor the vital work of journalists who inform the public and report hidden truths. This year, we remember and mourn the tragic deaths of the 57 Filipino civilians who lost their lives November 23, 2009 in Maguindanao. The victims included 32 journalists, cruelly slain while carrying out their crucial role in Philippine democracy.

Adlai E. Stevenson, former Governor of Illinois and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, once said: “The free press is the mother of all our liberties.” When, in 1948, the United States, the Philippines, and many other nations adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, they included among those rights the fundamental principle that everyone “has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

History has shown, however, that journalists continue to find themselves at risk. The November 23 massacre was met with horror, shock, and outrage in the Philippines, in America, and around the world. The United States condemned that atrocity in the strongest possible terms. We will continue to urge that the Philippine government aggressively and thoroughly pursue and bring to justice those responsible for the killings.

Americans stand together with Filipinos in support of the members of the press, who labor every day to expose truth and enhance accountability. The role of a free press is just as much a pillar of democracy as elections are. Let us all proclaim, on this World Press Freedom Day, our gratitude and admiration to all these courageous men and women of the press.

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